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ABSTRACT

Students' reasons for leaving Montgomery College after one semester, dropout trends, current activities of nonreturnees, and the impact that the one semester had on their careers or course of action were elicited by questionnaires mailed to 389 students. A total of 120 usable questionnaires were returned. The data collected showed that: (1) the major current activity of the students was full-time employment; (2) students in general education curriculums tended to terminate in greater numbers than did students enrolled in other curriculums; (3) Montgomery College was selected by the students because of its open admissions policy and its overall good reputation; (4) they left the college for personal reasons; (5) over 28 percent stated that they definitely planned to return to the college, whereas another 39 percent said they possibly would like to try again; only 8 percent indicated that they would not return to the college; and (6) approximately 46 percent felt the college had not prepared them at all or to a minor degree for their future, whereas 20 percent felt that they were prepared to a degree ranging from "well" to "excellently." Three appendixes to the report present the Nonreturning Students Follow-up Questionnaire, Schools Transferring Students Attended after Leaving Montgomery College, and Related Term Definitions. (DB)

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A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF FRESHMEN WHO LEFT MONTGOMERY COLLEGE AFTER JUST ONE SEMESTER OF ATTENDANCE

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1974

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
THE PROBLEM	1
THE METHODOLOGY	1
THE POPULATION	2
THE FINDINGS	2
Current Activity	2
Curriculum Areas	5
Reasons for Attending and Leaving	8
Attitudes toward Courses and Counseling	10
Plans for Returning	15
Changes in the College	18
Preparation for the Future	21
Transferring Students	22
Full-Time Employed Students	24
Students in the Military	29
SUMMARY, FINDINGS, AND IMPLICATIONS	30
APPENDIX	35
A Non-Returning Student Questionnaire	36
B Schools Attended After Leaving MC	40
C Related Term Definitions	42

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
I.	Current Activity of Non-Returning Students by Types of Curriculum. . . .	6
II.	Present Activity of Non-Returning Students by Curriculum Areas	7
III.	Non-Returning Students' Reasons for Attending and Leaving Montgomery College.	9
IV.	Students' Reasons for Leaving Montgomery College by Curriculum Areas . .	11
V.	Students' Attitudes toward their Choice of Courses and Instruction at MC.	12
VI.	Students' Attitudes toward their Choice of Courses and Counseling at MC.	13
VII.	Students' Attitudes toward their Choice of Courses and the Difficulty of Courses at MC	16
VIII.	Students' Attitudes Toward Returning to MC by Curriculum Areas	17
IX.	What Students Would like to see Changed MOST at Montgomery College . . .	19
X.	What Students Would like to see Changed LEAST at Montgomery College . .	20
XI.	Students' Opinions as to How well MC Prepared them for their Future . .	21
XII.	Curriculum Areas of Transferring Students while Attending MC and at their New School	23
XIII.	Type of School Transferring Students Attended after Leaving Montgomery College	23
XIV.	Credits Lost in Transfer	24
XV.	Relationship of Coursework at MC to Present Job Duties	26
XVI.	Students' Attitudes toward the Preparation MC Provided them for their Careers	27
XVII.	Future Career Intensions of Students in the Military	29

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE PAGE

1. First Semester Attrition of the Entering Class of Fall 1970. 3
2. Current Activity of Non-Returning Students by Percentages 4
3. Students' Attitudes toward Present and Preferred Structure of Career and Vocational Courses at MC. 28

A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF FRESHMEN WHO LEFT MONTGOMERY COLLEGE AFTER JUST ONE SEMESTER OF ATTENDANCE

THE PROBLEM

The follow-up study of the non-returning students entitled, Where Have All the Freshmen Gone? (Gell and Bleil, 1973), established baseline data for a continuing examination of non-returning matriculated students in general. However, of special concern is the student who enrolls in the fall and then leaves the College at the end of his first semester. Thus, a survey was conducted to find out something about these one-semester students. Included in the present study were only those freshmen students who were enrolled for the first time during the Fall 1970 semester and who chose not to enroll for the Spring 1971 semester.

In keeping with the intent of the Fall 1970 study, the purpose of the present investigation was to examine students' reasons for choosing to leave the College and to attempt to identify any trends that may be developing. Furthermore, it was the intent of this study to determine what happened to the students after they left the College and to assess what impact their brief exposure to Montgomery College might have had on their present careers or course of action.

METHODOLOGY

The data analyzed for this study were gathered through questionnaires mailed during the Spring of 1971 to 389 students who had enrolled as new students the previous fall. These students had entered Montgomery College for the first time in the Fall 1970 and chose not to return for the subsequent Spring 1971 semester. One hundred twenty usable questionnaires were returned (31%).

The questionnaire used for the present investigation was developed by the Montgomery College Office of Institutional Research for use with the initial follow-up of the Fall 1970 non-returning students. Specifically, the questionnaire is divided into four sections and requests general information as well as data related to those students who transferred to another school after leaving Montgomery, students who entered full-time employment, and students who enlisted in the military service (see Appendix A for questionnaire).

For the purpose of reporting the findings of the study, the report will generally follow the format of the questionnaire. General information will be examined initially, followed by data related to students enrolled in another school, employed students, and finally, students engaged in military service.

THE POPULATION

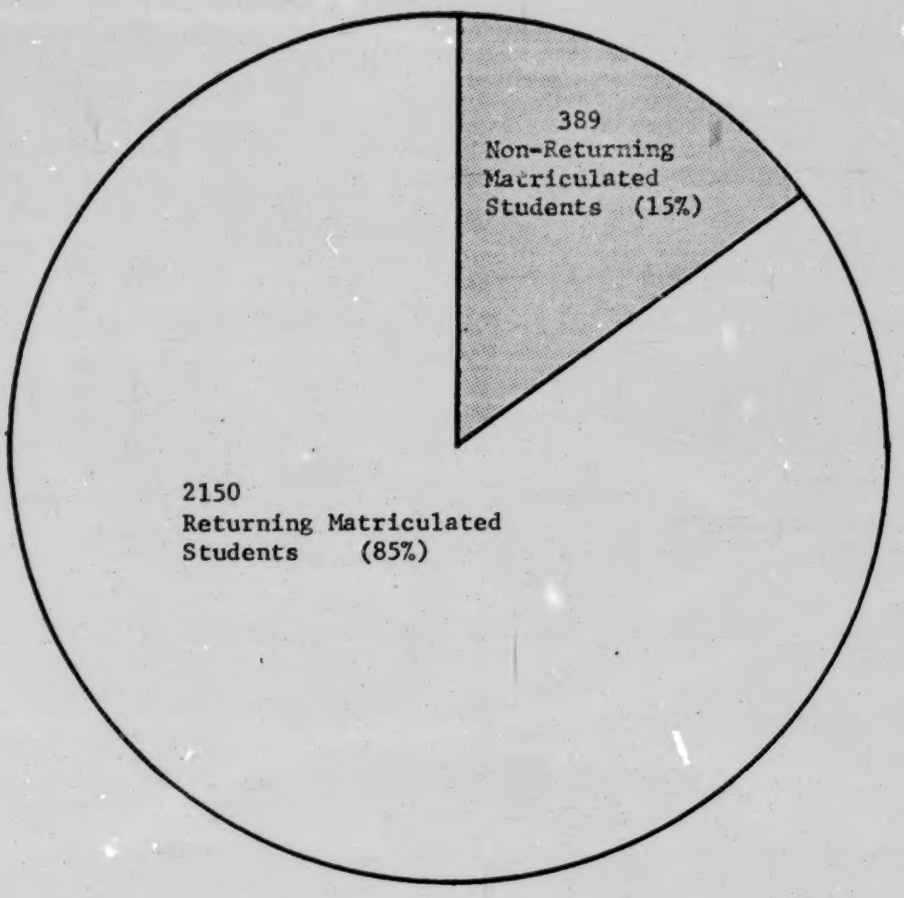
During the Fall 1970 semester, 2539 students matriculated at Montgomery College for the first time. Of that number, 389 (15%) students did not choose to enroll for the subsequent Spring semester (see Figure 1). Ninety-four (24%) of these non-returning students did not complete their first semester at Montgomery as they effected total withdrawals during the Fall semester.

For the purposes of this study only non-returning matriculated students were surveyed, and out of the 389 students contacted, 120 or 31 percent responded (see Appendix A for questionnaire).

THE FINDINGS

Current Activity

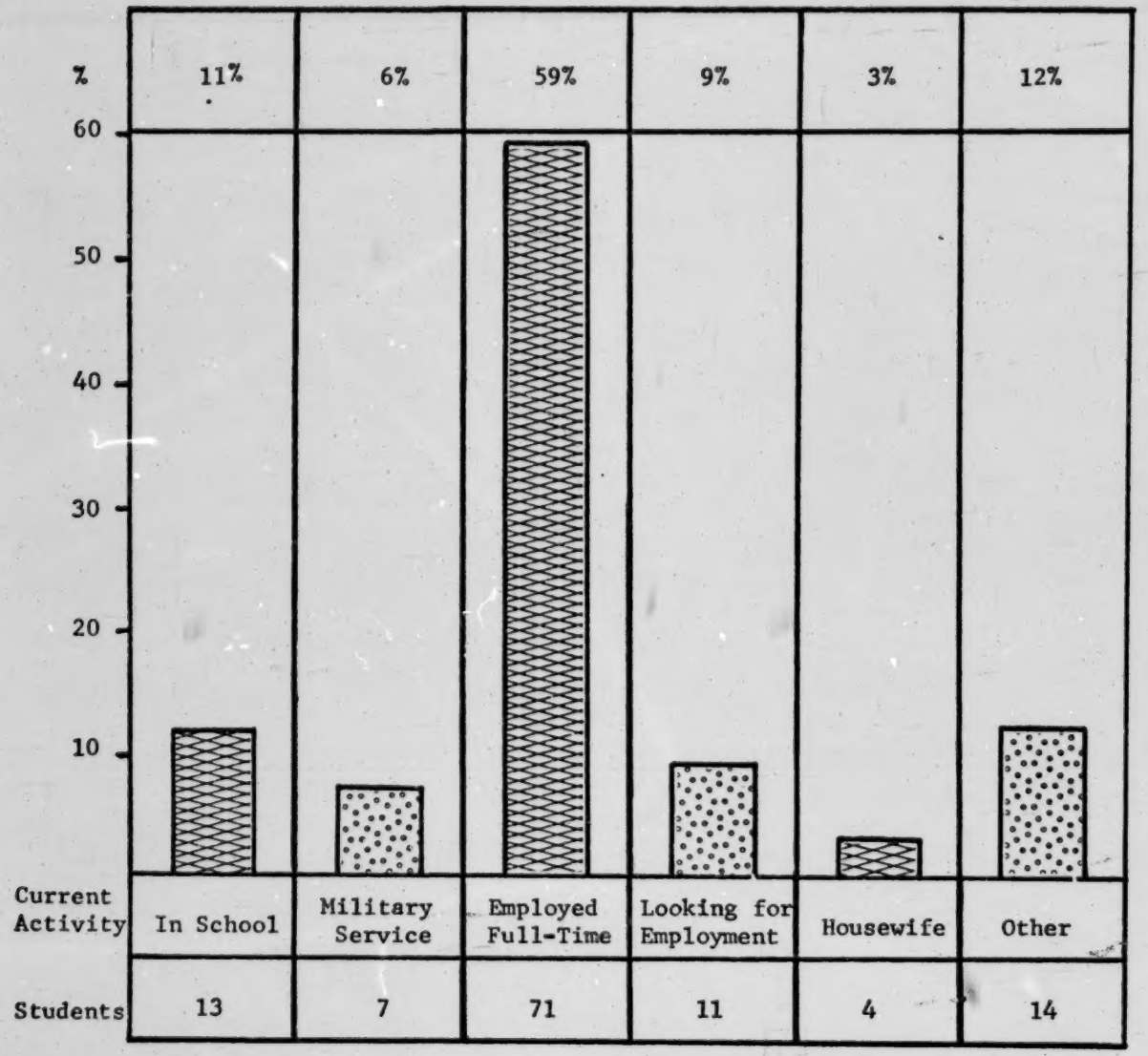
Figure 2 provides information regarding the whereabouts of the 120 students following their departure from Montgomery. As can be noted on



N = 2539

FIGURE 1

FIRST SEMESTER ATTRITION OF THE
ENTERING CLASS OF FALL 1970



N = 120

F I G U R E 2

CURRENT ACTIVITY OF NON-RETURNING STUDENTS
BY PERCENTAGES

the graph, the greatest number of non-returning students entered full-time employment after leaving Montgomery College (59%). An additional 11 percent of the students entered another institution of higher learning. In contrast, only 6 percent entered the military.

When comparing the data of the present study with that of the baseline group, it was found that a larger proportion of the initial students (58% vs 11%) transferred to another school after leaving Montgomery College. In addition, a smaller percentage of those students (26%) entered full-time employment as compared to 59 percent of the Spring 1971 group. Overall, it appears that students who leave after only one semester at Montgomery have a different activity pattern than do students with a longer tenure at the College. Certainly it appears that students do not tend to transfer to other institutions after only one semester here.

Curriculum Areas

Table I further breaks down the data by the type of curriculum in which the students had matriculated. Approximately three-fourths (71%) were enrolled in transfer programs while about one-fourth (29%) were in career curriculums. The data indicate that only 14 percent of the transfer-oriented students actually transferred to another institution in the Spring of 1971. On the other hand, 54 percent of the transfer students entered full-time employment. Likewise, with the career-oriented students, 74 percent entered full-time employment after leaving the College.

Table II examines the non-returning students by their individual curriculum areas. The largest number (29%) were enrolled in the general education program. The second largest group were enrolled in either the education

TABLE I

CURRENT ACTIVITY OF NON-RETURNING STUDENTS
BY TYPES OF CURRICULUMS

		In School Other than MC	In Military Service	Employed Full Time	Looking for Employment	Housewife	Other	Total
Transfer	Number	12	5	46	9	4	10	86
	Percent	10 %	4 %	38 %	7 %	3 %	9 %	71 %
Career	Number	1	2	25	2	0	4	34
	Percent	1 %	2 %	21 %	2 %	0 %	3 %	29 %
TOTAL	Number	13	7	71	11	4	14	120
	Percent	11 %	6 %	59 %	9 %	3 %	12 %	100%

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TABLE II

PRESENT ACTIVITY OF NON-RETURNING STUDENTS BY CURRICULUM AREAS

Curriculum Area	In School Other than MC	In Military Service	Employed Full-time	Looking for Employment	Housewife	Other	Sub-Total	Total	Percent
TRANSFER:									
Art			2	2				4	3
Business Administration	3	1	3	1		2		10	8
Computer Science (Math)			1	1				2	2
Education								14	11
Elementary	1		2	1		1	5		
Secondary			2		1	1	4		
Music			3				3		
Physical Education	1		1				2		
General Education								35	29
Humanities/Social Science	4	1	19	3	2	2	31		
Science/Math			3			1	4		
Engineering		1	2	1				4	3
Liberal Arts								13	11
Sequence	3	1	7		1		12		
Science/Math		1					1		
Medical Technology						1		1	1
Pre-Professional								3	3
Law						1	1		
Medicine						1	1		
Optometry			1				1		
SUB-TOTAL	12	5	46	9	4	10		86	71
CAREER:									
Computer Science-Business			4			1		5	4
Dental								2	2
Assistant			1				1		
Lab Technology			1				1		
Mental Health Technology			1					1	1
Printing Technology			2	1				3	3
Architect Technology	1							1	1
Electronics Technology			1					1	1
Business-General Management			2					2	2
Business Management		1						1	1
Criminal Justice		1	1	1		1		4	3
Secretary								14	11
Executive			6			1	7		
Legal			3			1	4		
Medical			1				1		
Certificate			2				2		
SUB-TOTAL	1	2	25	2	0	4		34	29
TOTAL Number	13	7	71	11	4	14		120	
TOTAL Percent	11	6	59	9	3	12			100

fields or the various secretarial programs (11%). Only two of the education students transferred to another school after leaving Montgomery College while eight entered full-time employment, thus, indicating that they may have changed their initial vocational plans after entering the College.

Reasons for Attending and Leaving

One of the major focuses of this study was to determine why the non-returning Fall 1970 freshmen were originally attracted to Montgomery College and why after only one semester of attendance they chose not to return for the subsequent Spring 1971 semester. A distribution of the students' reasons for attending and leaving the College is presented in Table III.

As can be observed, the greatest number of students (26), other than those not responding to the question, stated that they chose to attend Montgomery College because of its open admissions policy. An additional 24 students selected to attend the College because of its general reputation.

Numerous reasons were also provided by the students for choosing to leave Montgomery after only one semester of attendance. Among the most prevalent reasons given were personal reasons not related to school (20%) or reasons falling into the "other" category which were, on the most part, also personal in nature (31%).

Interesting to note, while only 18 students stated they left the College to take a job, 71 students actually entered full-time employment upon leaving (see Table I). Further noteworthy was the fact that the greatest number of students who left because of discontent with the curriculum also tended to be those students who attended the College because of its open admissions policy.

TABLE III

NON-RETURNING STUDENTS' REASONS FOR ATTENDING AND LEAVING MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

Reason for Leaving Montgomery College \ Reason for Attending Montgomery College	Special Courses	Counseling Service	Job Placement Service	General Reputation	Open Admission Policy	Other	No Response	Total	Percent
Took a job	5	1		2	4	2	4	18	15
Couldn't get good enough grades	1	1		2	3		3	10	8
Too much course work					2	1		3	3
School wasn't relevant	1			2	4	3	4	14	11
Military service interfered				1	1	1	3	6	5
Personal - not related to school		1		7	5	4	7	24	20
Was confused about what was expected					2			2	2
Only needed certain courses for job/promotion	1					1	2	4	3
Other				9	5	10	13	37	31
No Response				1		1		2	2
TOTAL	8	3	0	24	26	23	36	120	
PERCENT	7	3	0	20	21	19	30		100

A closer examination of the 120 students' reasons for leaving Montgomery College is depicted in Table IV. The students were categorized by curriculum areas as they related to the reasons for leaving the College. Students in the various curriculums left Montgomery College for a variety of reasons not associated with any one curriculum area. Overall, it would appear that the reasons students chose to leave Montgomery College after one semester of attendance tended to be indeed personal, rather than institutionally related.

Attitudes toward Courses and Counseling

Although many students left the College for personal reasons, it is important to assess their feelings toward the courses and services provided by the College while they were in attendance. Tables V and VI are directed toward providing data related to the students' attitudes toward their choice of courses at Montgomery and how their attitudes related to the benefits they thought they gained from the instruction and counseling services provided.

Over half (51%) of the non-returning students stated that they did not regret their choice of courses at Montgomery College, while 26 percent of the 120 students felt they had regrets about their course selection. The findings gathered from the present study are somewhat different from those collected from the initial baseline study. Sixty-six percent of the non-returning students involved in the baseline study stated that they had no regrets regarding their course selection while 12 percent of the students expressed regrets. There appears to be a slight move toward greater dissatisfaction with course selection suggesting that dissatisfied students tend to withdraw from the College after only one semester.

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TABLE IV

STUDENTS' REASONS FOR LEAVING MONTGOMERY COLLEGE BY CURRICULUM AREAS

Curriculum Area	Took a job	Couldn't get good enough grades	Too much course work	School wasn't Relevant	Military service interfered	Personal-not related to school	Confused about what was expected	Only needed certain courses for job	Other	No response	Sub-Total	Total	Percent
TRANSFER:													
Art	1			2					1			4	3
Business Administration		2	1	1	1	1			4			10	8
Computer Science (Math)	1								1			2	2
Education												14	11
Elementary		1				2			2		5		
Secondary	1					1		1	1		4		
Music	1		1	1							3		
Physical Education						1			1		2		
General Education												35	29
Humanities/Social Science	2	2	1	3	1	9	1		12		31		
Science/Math		1				2			1		4		
Engineering				1	1	1			1			4	3
Liberal Arts												13	11
Sequence	2	1		1	1	3			3	1	12		
Science/Math					1						1		
Medical Technology									1			1	1
Pre-Professional												3	3
Law									1		1		
Medicine									1		1		
Optometry				1							1		
SUB-TOTAL	8	7	3	10	5	20	1	1	30	1		86	71
CAREER:													
Computer Science/Business	2								2	1		5	4
Dental												2	2
Assistant						1					1		
Lab Technology									1		1		
Mental Health Technology				1								1	1
Printing Technology	2						1					3	3
Architect Technology				1								1	1
Electronics Technology						1						1	1
Business/General Management		1							1			2	2
Business Management		1										1	1
Criminal Justice	1				1	1			1			4	3
Secretary												14	11
Executive	2			1		1		3			7		
Legal	2								2		4		
Medical	1										1		
Certificate		1		1							2		
SUB-TOTAL	10	3	0	4	1	4	1	3	7	1		34	29
TOTAL Number	18	10	3	14	6	24	2	4	37	2		120	
TOTAL Percent	15	8	3	12	5	20	2	3	31	1			100

TABLE V

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THEIR CHOICE OF COURSES AND INSTRUCTION AT MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

Benefit from Instruction \ Regret of choice of courses at MC		Yes	No	No Response	Total Percent
None	Number	2	1	1	4
	Percent	2%	1%	.8%	3%
Very Little	Number	8	3	1	12
	Percent	6%	3%	.8%	10%
Somewhat	Number	17	31	1	49
	Percent	14%	26%	.8%	41%
Very Much	Number	3	25	1	29
	Percent	3%	20%	.8%	24%
No Response	Number	1	1	24	26
	Percent	.8%	.8%	20%	22%
TOTAL	Number	31	61	28	120
	Percent	26%	51%	23%	100%

TABLE VI

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THEIR CHOICE OF COURSES AND COUNSELING AT MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

Benefit from Counseling \ Regret of choice of courses at MC		Yes	No	No Response	Total Percent
None	Number	9	11	1	21
	Percent	7%	9%	.8%	17%
Very Little	Number	6	11	1	18
	Percent	5%	9%	.8%	15%
Somewhat	Number	8	27	2	37
	Percent	7%	23%	1.6%	31%
Very Much	Number	7	6	0	13
	Percent	6%	5%	0%	11%
No Response	Number	1	6	24	31
	Percent	.8%	5%	20%	26%
TOTAL	Number	31	61	28	120
	Percent	26%	51%	23%	100%

In addition, the students were asked how much benefit they thought they derived from the instruction at the College. Approximately 24 percent of the students felt that they gained very much from the instruction while another 41 percent stated that they gained somewhat from the instruction. It would appear from the data gathered that those students who were satisfied with their course selection were the same students who felt that they gained from the instruction provided.

When asked to rate the benefits derived from the counseling program at Montgomery, the percentages of response for the categories listed approximated those of the baseline data. A total of 42 percent of the baseline students reported that they benefited "very much" or "somewhat" from the counseling program after one or more semesters of attendance at the College. Likewise, 42 percent of the Spring 1971 non-returning students involved in this study stated that they felt they had benefited "very much" or "somewhat" from the counseling services. The above findings would tend to support the view that at least two-fifths or better of the non-returning students felt they were provided with sufficient counseling services during their brief enrollment at the College. Further, it would appear that the students who were pleased with their course selections were also the students who felt that they had gained some benefit from the College's counseling services.

It might be construed from the above data that the students who availed themselves of the counseling services gained assistance in the selection of their courses and in turn gained greater benefit from the instruction provided by the College. However, it must be noted that

although these students appeared to be satisfied with their course selection and instruction they nevertheless chose not to return to the College. The reasoning behind this fact would appear to be that over half of the students (51%) left the College for personal reasons rather than for academic or curriculum dissatisfaction.

A further look at the students' attitudes toward courses at Montgomery College is provided in Table VII. Here students were asked to state their feelings toward the difficulty of Montgomery College courses.

It can be observed from the table that 62 percent of the non-returning students felt that courses at the College were slightly difficult or not difficult at all, while only one student out of the 120 students responding to this question felt that courses at the College were very difficult. Again, in keeping with the findings reported in Tables V and VI, it would appear that many of the students who stated they did not regret their course selection also felt that the courses at the College were not difficult. Of course, it must be considered that success in courses may breed satisfaction with instruction.

Plans for Returning

Another aspect of the present study was to assess the students' feelings toward returning to Montgomery College. Data related to this question are presented in Table VIII. For a closer look at the responses, the students have been grouped according to their curriculum areas.

Over 28 percent of the students disclosed that they had definite plans to return to Montgomery College. Another 39 percent reported that they thought they would possibly like to give the College another try.

TABLE VII

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THEIR CHOICE OF COURSES AND THE DIFFICULTY OF COURSES AT MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

Difficulty of MC Courses \ Regret of choice of courses at MC		Yes	No	No Response	Total Percent
Not Difficult	Number	13	32	3	48
	Percent	11%	27%	2%	40%
A little	Number	9	17	0	26
	Percent	8%	14%	0%	22%
Somewhat	Number	8	11	1	20
	Percent	6%	9%	.8%	16%
Very Difficult	Number	1	0	0	1
	Percent	.8%	0%	0%	.8%
No Response	Number	0	1	24	25
	Percent	0%	.8%	20%	21%
TOTAL	Number	31	61	28	120
	Percent	26%	51%	23%	100%

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TABLE VIII

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD RETURNING TO MONTGOMERY COLLEGE BY CURRICULUM AREAS

Curriculum Area	Avoid it	Possibly attempt it Again	No feelings one way or the other	Would like to give it another try	Definitely planning to return	Finished at MC - no reason to return	Other	No Response	Sub-Total	Total	Percent
TRANSFER:											
Art		2		1	1					4	3
Business Administration	1	1		3			4	1		10	8
Computer Science (Math)		1					1			2	2
Education										14	11
Elementary	2			2		1			5		
Secondary					3		1		4		
Music				1	2				3		
Physical Education					2				2		
General Education										35	29
Humanities/Social Science	2	10	2	3	7	1	6		31		
Science/Math			1		2		1		4		
Engineering				1	2		1			4	3
Liberal Arts										13	11
Sequence			1	1	6	1	2	1	12		
Science/Math							1		1		
Medical Technology							1			1	1
Pre-Professional										3	3
Law					1				1		
Medicine			1						1		
Optometry		1							1		
SUB-TOTAL	5	15	5	12	26	3	18	2		86	71
CAREER:											
Computer Science/Business		3			1		1			5	4
Dental										2	2
Assistant		1							1		
Lab Technology			1						1		
Mental Health Technology	1									1	1
Printing Technology				1	2					3	3
Architect Technology					1					1	1
Electronics Technology							1			1	1
Business/General Management				1	1					2	2
Business Management		1								1	1
Criminal Justice		1		2	1					4	3
Secretary										14	11
Executive		5		1			1		7		
Legal		1			2		1		4		
Medical		1							1		
Certificate		1		1					2		
SUB-TOTAL	1	14	1	6	8	0	4	0		34	29
TOTAL Number	6	29	6	18	34	3	22	2		120	
TOTAL Percent	5	24	5	15	28	3	18	2			100

Only 5 percent of the students stated that they would avoid returning to the College while 3 percent reported that they were finished at the College and had no reason to return. The inference might be drawn from the above findings that a majority of the students who leave after just one semester have positive feelings toward the College and are potential reenrollees.

In looking at types of curriculum in relation to desire to return to Montgomery, it was found that the greatest proportion of students who definitely planned to return to the College were enrolled in the General Education curriculum. Further, it should be noted that 37 percent of the Transfer-oriented students intended to return as opposed to 28 percent of the Career-oriented students.

Changes in the College

Tables IX and X display student attitudes related to what they would like to see changed most and least at Montgomery College. Only the most frequently suggested changes are presented. The number of students suggesting changes was much lower than responses to most of the other questions contained in the questionnaire. Only 46 percent of the students suggested things they would like to see changed while a meager 30 percent mentioned things they would not like to see changed. However, the lack of response regarding changes could be interpreted as positive feelings toward the College.

The area receiving the greatest number of responses for most needed changes other than the "no response" category was a desire to see required courses eliminated. About 8 percent of the students felt that certain courses should not be required. Changes in rules was the second category receiving the greatest response (6%).

TABLE IX

WHAT STUDENTS WOULD LIKE TO SEE CHANGED MOST AT MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

Most Desired Changes	Number of Students	Percent of Total
Required Courses	10	8
Rules	7	6
Student Attitudes	5	4
Too much homework for evening students	5	4
MC converted to 4-year school	5	4
Instruction	3	3
Facilities	3	3
Other	17	14
No Response	65	54
TOTAL	120	100

TABLE X

WHAT STUDENTS WOULD LIKE TO SEE CHANGED
LEAST AT MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

Least Desired Changes	Number of Students	Percent of Total
Open Admissions	8	7
Courses	6	5
Facilities	5	4
Instruction	4	3
Price	3	3
Other	10	8
No Response	84	70
TOTAL	120	100

Approximately 7 percent of the non-returning students participating in this study felt that the open admissions policy should not be changed while 5 percent of the students liked the courses as they are and 4 percent of the students saw no need to change the facilities provided by the College.

The implications to be derived from the above data are rather limited in that the small proportion of responses does not allow for significant differences to be analyzed between the various categories.

Preparation for the Future

Information regarding student opinions of how well Montgomery College prepared them for the future is presented in Table XI. A total of 46 percent of the students felt that the College prepared them a little or not at all for their future. Only 8 percent of the students stated that Montgomery prepared them very well or excellently for their future.

It must be emphasized here that when the 120 students responded to this question, the point in time was not far enough into their futures to assess adequately the impact of their brief exposure to the College. Concomitant to this view is the premise that one semester at any college would not provide a sufficient amount of instructional exposure to make a significant impact on a student's vocational future. Again, it should also be noted that during the first semester of course work at the College, a large part of the courses are general or introductory in nature and not directed toward advanced skills for specific fields.

TABLE XI

STUDENTS' OPINIONS AS TO HOW WELL MONTGOMERY COLLEGE PREPARED THEM FOR THEIR FUTURE

Opinion	Number of Students	Percent of Students
Not at all	22	18
A little	34	28
Well	14	12
Very Well	7	6
Excellently	2	2
No Response	41	34
TOTAL	120	100

Transferring Students

This section of the report will deal with the non-returning students who entered another institution of higher education after leaving Montgomery College. Included in this grouping were 13 students who constituted 11 percent of the total 120 students participating in this study. Twelve of the 13 students had been enrolled in a transfer-oriented curriculum while one student was enrolled in a career-oriented curriculum program. The breakdown of the students by curriculum areas is presented in Table XII.

The largest percentage of the 13 transferring students were registered at Montgomery in the General Education curriculum (30%) followed by Business Administration (23%) and Liberal Arts (23%). As can be noted in Table XII, five of the 13 students continued in the same curriculum area when they transferred to another school while eight of the students changed majors when they changed schools.

After leaving Montgomery College, the 13 transfer students entered various schools of higher education. Table XIII provides a count of the types and location of schools these students chose to attend.

Two of the 13 transferring students selected to attend the University of Maryland while five of the students enrolled in colleges or universities outside of Maryland or the District of Columbia. Due to the limited sample size it is difficult to make any valid assumptions from the data gathered. However, from the data available, it does look as if there was a move toward attending colleges or universities outside of Maryland or the metropolitan Washington area. The limited findings of this study are not in proportion to those of the baseline study where the largest percentage of students selected to enroll in the University of Maryland upon leaving Montgomery College (50% vs 15%).

TABLE XII

CURRICULUM AREAS OF TRANSFERRING STUDENTS WHILE ATTENDING MC AND AT THEIR NEW SCHOOL

Curriculum Area at MC \ Curriculum Area at New School	Same	Psychology	Sociology	English	Auto Mechanic	Humanities	Social Worker	Key Punching	Law Enforcement	Total	Percent
Business Administration	2								1	3	23
Elementary Education	1									1	8
Physical Education	1									1	8
General Education					1	1	1	1		4	30
Liberal Arts		1	1	1						3	23
Architectural Technology	1									1	8
TOTAL	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	13	100

TABLE XIII

TYPE OF SCHOOL TRANSFERRING STUDENTS ATTENDED AFTER LEAVING MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

	Univ. of Md.	Other Md. State College	Univ. or College in Wash. D.C.	Univ. or College not in Md. or D.C.	Trade or Technical School	Total
Number	2	1	1	5	4	13
Percent	15%	8%	8%	39%	30%	100%

Another area of concern focused on students' ability to transfer credits earned at Montgomery College to another institution of higher education. As is indicated in Table XIV, seven of the 13 students stated that they were able to transfer Montgomery College credits to their new schools. However, it must be emphasized that eight of the 13 students changed their majors when transferring, therefore, 54 percent was a significant percentage when considering the relevant data. Again, the data obtained for this study supports that of the baseline study.

TABLE XIV

CREDITS LOST IN TRANSFER

Credits Lost	Number of Students	Percent of Total
Yes	6	46
None	7	54
TOTAL	13	100

Full-Time Employed Students

Over half of the students (59%) stated that they were engaged in full-time employment after leaving Montgomery College. As has been previously pointed out in this report, only 15 percent of the students stated that they left Montgomery College to seek full-time employment while 59 percent revealed that they were now employed. This difference in findings could be attributed to the possibility that many of the students could have been employed full-time while attending the College or perhaps their plans were changed after they terminated. No information regarding this factor is available from the data gathered.

Table XV provides a comparison of the students' general employment fields and the relationship between coursework at the College and skills required for jobs. The largest percentage of "full-time employed" students (60%) entered either secretarial or clerical-related jobs after leaving Montgomery College. Out of these 42 students, 30 (71%) felt that their coursework at the College was unnecessary or unrelated to their present jobs. The remaining eleven students stated that they felt their studies were helpful for their jobs. However, from the data gathered, it is not known how many of these 42 students actually had in mind these types of jobs when they entered Montgomery College.

Overall, 69 percent of the students entering full-time employment after leaving the College felt their coursework was unnecessary or unrelated to their present jobs while almost 27 percent of the students felt their studies were helpful.

Work and studies were examined again by way of a question directed toward the students' attitudes about how well the College prepared them for their careers. It is assumed that a student's present job may not be the job he intends to have for his life's career. However, 52 percent of the employed students felt that Montgomery College did not prepare them at all for their careers (see Table XVI). On the other hand, 26 percent stated that the College prepared them well, very well,or excellently. Here again, it must be taken into consideration that one semester of exposure to college coursework was hardly sufficient to prepare a student for certain positions, especially since such a limited number of courses were taken, and these may have been general courses such as English or Freshmen Seminar.

TABLE XV

RELATIONSHIP OF COURSEWORK AT MONTGOMERY COLLEGE
TO PRESENT JOB DUTIES

Present Job / Attitude toward course work at MC and job		Studies were necessary or required for job	Studies helpful for job	Studies unnecessary unrelated to job	Total	Percent
Bookkeeping		1	2	4	7	10
Clerical		1	5	15	21	30
Insurance		1	2	2	5	7
Computer Related			1		1	1
Secretarial			6	15	21	30
Managerial				5	5	7
Skilled Trades			2	7	9	12
Unskilled Trades			1	1	2	3
TOTAL	Number	3	19	49	71	
	Percent	4	27	69		100

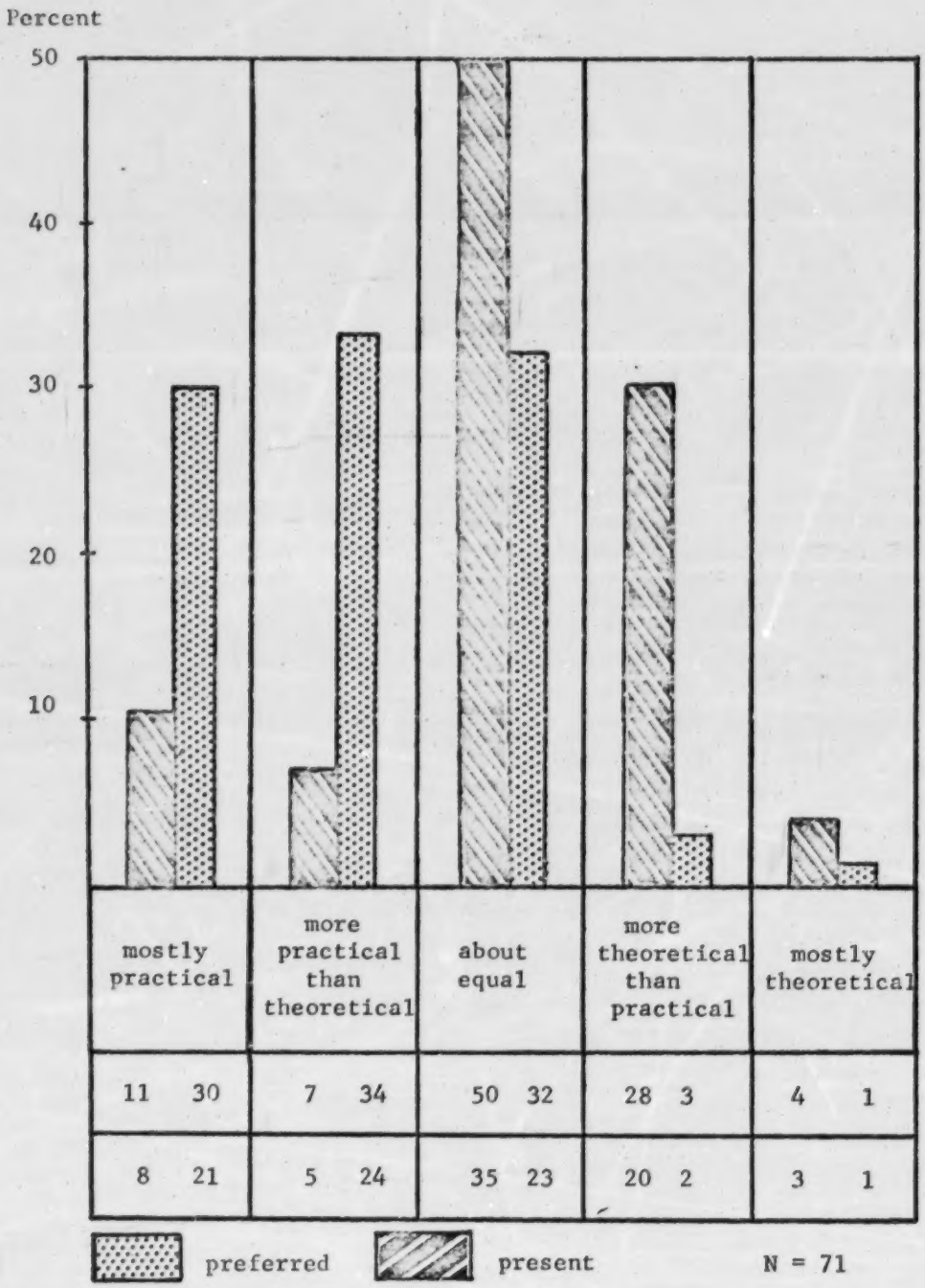
TABLE XVI

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PREPARATION MONTGOMERY COLLEGE PROVIDED THEM FOR THEIR CAREERS

Response	Number of Students	Percent of Total
Not at all	37	52
A little	16	22
Well	11	16
Very Well	4	6
Excellently	3	4
TOTAL	71	100

The final area of information examined for full-time employed students' reactions concerned their attitudes toward the present and future structure of career and vocational courses at Montgomery College. Data pertaining to the two questions are presented in Figure 3. The largest proportion of students (50%) felt that courses at Montgomery were about equal in their practical and theoretical content. Approximately 28 percent of the students felt the courses were more theoretical than practical in nature.

In observing students' recommendations for future course content, it can be viewed that students for the most part preferred courses to be more practically oriented. Complaints about college curriculums are voiced by a large majority of all college students whether they attend graduate



F I G U R E 3

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD PRESENT AND PREFERRED STRUCTURE OF CAREER AND VOCATIONAL COURSES AT MC

schools, four year colleges, or community colleges (Mayhew and Ford, 1971)*. Students generally feel that they need practical information to prepare them for actual "on the job" duties. It does appear from the students' responses that Montgomery College needs to move in the direction of providing students with more practical information to meet their needs.

Students in the Military

Out of the 120 non-returning students only 6 percent stated that they entered the military after leaving Montgomery College. Due to this small proportion, the data related to students in the military service will be handled very briefly.

Four of the seven students indicated on the questionnaire that they planned to return to school when their military service was completed. None stated that they would make the military a career (See Table XVII).

TABLE XVII

FUTURE CAREER INTENSIONS OF STUDENTS IN THE MILITARY

Intensions	Number of Students
Military Career	0
Return to School	4
Enter a job	1
Other	2
TOTAL	7

*Mayhew, L.B. & Ford, P.J. Changing the Curriculum, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1971.

When asked to assess the relationship between their military training courses and the skills they thought they would need in a civilian occupation, three of the students felt their military training was not beneficial while two students felt that it was beneficial. Taking this area of information one step further, one student felt his military training was related to his studies at Montgomery while another student did not.

The final question directed toward students who entered the military focused on how well they thought Montgomery College prepared them for their future. Four of the seven students said "a little," while two students stated "well." From the small number of students involved, it is difficult to reach any conclusions regarding their military experiences and intentions. It can only be noted that their responses were in agreement with those of the military students involved in the baseline study.

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, AND IMPLICATIONS

The present follow-up study is part of a continuing examination of non-returning students at Montgomery College. The initial study, Where Have All the Freshmen Gone? (Gell and Bleil, 1973), provided the baseline data for subsequent investigations. While the baseline study focused on non-returning students who had attended the College for one or more semesters, the present study focused on matriculated students who had attended Montgomery for only one semester. The records revealed that 15 percent of the entering Fall 1970 class failed to enroll for the Spring 1971 semester.

The actual subjects participating in the study were the 120 students who completed questionnaires out of a possible 389 non-returning students. The questionnaire used for the present study was created for the baseline

study and contained four sections: general information, information pertaining to in-school students, information regarding full-time employed students, and information from students who had entered military service.

When comparing the findings of this study with those of the baseline study, it was found that much of the data collected for this investigation was in support of the baseline findings. However, in certain instances there were discrepancies found in the various proportions of responses to questions. For instance, the major current activity of the students involved in the present study was found to be full-time employment (59%) as compared to the baseline study were "in-school other than Montgomery College" appeared to be the favored activity (58%). Whether this difference in activity entered after leaving Montgomery can be attributed to subject sample, financial needs, or changing attitudes toward the value of education cannot be determined from the data available.

In looking at the curriculum area which fostered the most non-returning students, it was found that students matriculated in General Education curriculums tended to terminate their studies at Montgomery in greater numbers than students enrolled in other curriculums. This finding could be related to the fact that a large proportion of students matriculating in the College do select a General Education curriculum.

One of the major focuses of this study was to further examine why students chose to attend Montgomery College and why after only one semester of attendance they chose not to return. In agreement with the baseline findings, the findings of this study indicated that students selected to attend Montgomery because of its open admissions policy and its overall good

reputation. On the other hand, over half of the students involved in this study indicated that they chose to leave the College for personal-related reasons. What these personal reasons were cannot be discerned from the data gathered. For future studies concerning students' reasons for leaving the College before earning a degree, greater detail should be emphasized when gathering data related to this topic.

Many of the non-returning students' reasons for leaving could have been related to problems such as financial income, which is strongly suggested by the large proportion (59%) of students who entered employment upon termination, or problems related to the social environment, or their individual vocational aspirations. Perhaps types of problems such as these, if known, could have been averted by sessions with the counseling staff. The problem then becomes how to ferret out those students who are potential terminators who could and should be helped prior to their actual leaving the school. Since students' reasons for leaving Montgomery College are on the most part not related to their academic instruction, more effort might be made to deal with personal situations that appear to exist. In agreement with the above findings, the findings of the baseline study also revealed that the majority of students left Montgomery College because of personal rather than instructionally-related reasons. Perhaps questionnaires distributed at intervals throughout the duration of students' first semester at the College would help. In this way potential non-returning students could be identified before they actually leave the College.

Further, it must be emphasized that it should not be considered "bad" for students to decide to leave the College before completing a certificate or degree program. Over 28 percent of the students stated that they

definitely planned to return to Montgomery College while another 39 percent said they would possibly like to give it another try. Only 8 percent of the students indicated that they did not need to or want to return to the College.

The above data would appear to support the view that a large proportion of the students categorized as "non-returning students" were not non-returning students at all but were merely students engaged in a "time-out period" during their educational endeavors.

A final area of concern of this study was to evaluate students' opinions as to how well they felt Montgomery College had prepared them for their future. Approximately 46 percent stated that they felt Montgomery College had not prepared them at all or only a little for their future as compared to 20 percent who felt they were prepared "well," "very well," or "excellently."

This obviously was a most difficult question for the students to answer, as indicated by the large percentage of students who left their answer blank (34%). Furthermore, it must be emphasized that 94 students (24%) out of the total 389 non-returning students did not complete their first semester at the College. It may then be assumed that a portion of the 120 students completing questionnaires also did not complete their first semester at the College, therefore further limiting any potential benefit from their exposure to Montgomery College.

This study was undertaken as part of a continuing examination of non-returning students at Montgomery College. It is hoped that some meaningful inroads may be made from the findings of such studies as this to better understand this particular type of student and his special needs.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

NONRETURNING STUDENTS FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

NON-RETURNING STUDENTS FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

2-10 _____ (correct name)

11-31 address _____

_____

32 social security no. _____

PLEASE CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOX OR COMPLETE AS APPROPRIATE

33 ARE YOU NOW....? (Check one only)

☐1 In school — *Please complete Part A*
☐2 In military service — *Please complete Part B*
☐3 Employed full-time — *Please complete Part C*
☐4 Looking for employment
☐5 Housewife
☐6 Other *Please specify* _____

Please complete Part D

34 WHY DID YOU LEAVE MONTGOMERY COLLEGE? (Check one only)

☐1 Took a job
☐2 Couldn't get good enough grades
☐3 Too much course work
☐4 School wasn't relevant
☐5 Military service interfered
☐6 Personal, nothing to do with school
☐7 Was confused about what was expected
☐8 Only needed certain courses for job or promotion
☐9 Other *Please specify* _____

35 WHAT IS YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARD COMING BACK TO MONTGOMERY COLLEGE?

☐1 Avoid it by all means
☐2 Possibly attempt it again
☐3 No feelings one way or the other
☐4 Would like to give it another try
☐5 Definitely planning to return
☐6 Finished at Montgomery College No reason to return
☐7 Other, *Please specify* _____

PART A

IN SCHOOL

36 ARE YOU CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN....?

☐1 University of Maryland
☐2 Other Maryland State College
☐3 University or College in Washington, D.C.
☐4 University or College not in Maryland or D.C.
☐5 Trade or Technical School

37-38 WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT MAJOR? _____

39 DID YOU LOSE ANY CREDITS IN TRANSFERRING FROM [illegible] TO YOUR PRESENT SCHOOL? 1 _____ Yes 2 _____ No

If yes, how many and in what courses? _____

_____

40 HOW WELL DID MONTGOMERY COLLEGE PREPARE YOU FOR YOUR PRESENT SCHOOL?

☐1 Not at all
☐2 A little
☐3 Well
☐4 Very Well
☐5 Excellently

1974 RETURNING STUDENTS FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PART B

MILITARY

DO YOU INTEND TO....?

41 ☐1 Make a career of the military service ☐2 Return to school after service ☐3 Return to, or find a job after service ☐4 Other, *Please specify* _____

IS THE MILITARY GIVING YOU TRAINING CLASSES IN SKILLS WHICH ARE USABLE IN CIVILIAN OCCUPATIONS?

42 ☐ 1 Yes ☐ 2 No

43 IF YES, A. Are these classes related to your studies at M.C.? ☐ 1 Yes ☐ 2 No

44 B. Do you plan to continue training in this field when you leave military service? ☐ 1 Yes ☐ 2 No

HOW WELL DID MONTGOMERY COLLEGE PREPARE YOU FOR YOUR FUTURE?

45 ☐1 Not at all ☐2 A little ☐3 Well ☐4 Very Well ☐5 Excellently

PART C

EMPLOYED

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP OF YOUR STUDIES AT MONTGOMERY COLLEGE TO YOUR PRESENT JOB?

46 ☐1 Studies were necessary or required for job ☐2 Studies were helpful for the job ☐3 Studies were unnecessary for or unrelated to the job

PLEASE INDICATE HOW YOU FEEL M.C.'S CAREER OR VOCATIONAL COURSES ARE PRESENTLY STRUCTURED.

47 ☐1 Mostly practical experience ☐2 More practical than theoretical ☐3 About equally practical and theoretical ☐4 More theoretical than practical ☐5 Mostly theoretical emphasis

PLEASE INDICATE HOW YOU WOULD LIKE THE CAREER OR VOCATIONAL COURSES TO BE STRUCTURED.

48 ☐1 Mostly practical experience ☐2 More practical than theoretical ☐3 About equally practical and theoretical ☐4 More theoretical than practical ☐5 Mostly theoretical emphasis

HOW WELL DID MONTGOMERY COLLEGE PREPARE YOU FOR YOUR CAREER?

49 ☐1 Not at all ☐2 A little ☐3 Well ☐4 Very well ☐5 Excellently

50-52 WHAT IS THE TITLE AND MAJOR DUTIES OF YOUR PRESENT JOB? _____

_____

COMMENTS

_____

_____

_____

return completed questionnaire in enclosed, stamped, self-addressed envelope to: OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH
MONTGOMERY COLLEGE
Rockville, Maryland 20850

NON-RETURNING STUDENTS FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PART II

GENERAL

53 WHAT PART OF M.C.'S PROGRAM WAS MOST IMPORTANT IN YOUR CHOICE TO ATTEND?

☐1 Special courses ☐2 Counseling Service ☐3 Job Placement Service ☐4 General Reputation ☐5 Open Admission Policy ☐6 Other, *Please specify* _____

54 DID YOU REGRET YOUR CHOICE OF COURSES AT MONTGOMERY COLLEGE?

1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No

If so, what do you wish you had taken? _____

55 DID YOU BENEFIT FROM THE INSTRUCTION?

☐1 No ☐2 Very little ☐3 Somewhat ☐4 Very Much

56 DID YOU BENEFIT FROM THE COUNSELING ?

☐1 No ☐2 Very little ☐3 Somewhat ☐4 Very Much

57 WERE THE COURSES TOO DIFFICULT?

☐1 No ☐2 A little ☐3 Somewhat ☐4 Very Much

WHAT WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO SEE CHANGED AT MONTGOMERY COLLEGE?

58-59 _____

_____

WHAT WOULD YOU LEAST LIKE TO SEE CHANGED AT MONTGOMERY COLLEGE?

60-61 _____

_____

62 HOW WELL DID MONTGOMERY COLLEGE PREPARE YOU FOR YOUR FUTURE?

☐1 Not at all ☐2 A little ☐3 Well ☐4 Very Well ☐5 Excellently

COMMENTS

_____

_____

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE IN ENCLOSED, STAMPED, SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE TO:

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH
MONTGOMERY COLLEGE
51 MANNAKEE STREET
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

APPENDIX B

SCHOOLS TRANSFERRING STUDENTS ATTENDED AFTER LEAVING
MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

APPENDIX B

SCHOOLS TRANSFERRING STUDENTS ATTENDED AFTER LEAVING MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

	Number of Students
College or University:	
University of Maryland	2
Frederick Community College	1
Taylor University	1
Rutgers University	1
Fort Lewis College	1
El Paso College	1
Texas Lutheran College	1
Strayer Junior College	1
Trade or Technical School:	
Lincoln Technical Institute	1
Key Punch School, Silver Spring, Md.	1
Maryland Drafting Institute	1
Gardner School of Business	1
TOTAL	13

APPENDIX C

RELATED TERM DEFINITIONS

APPENDIX C

RELATED TERM DEFINITIONS

1. Matriculated Students -

Matriculated students are those persons who are admitted to a degree or certificate curriculum. To be admitted as a matriculated student in a curriculum, an applicant must meet any one of the following conditions:

(a) be a graduate of a secondary school or the equivalent;

(b) have the permission of his or her secondary school principal to waive the senior year of high school; or

(c) have earned twelve hours of college credit at Montgomery College or any other accredited institution, with a cumulative grade point average of 2.00.

Matriculated students may attend the college either full-time or part-time.

2. Non-Returning Students -

Non-returning students for this study are classified as those students who entered Montgomery College for the first time for the Fall 1970 semester and who chose not to enroll for the subsequent Spring 1971 semester.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

NOV 1 1974

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